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Agenda item 122
Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Strengthening the investigation functions in the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 59/287, the General Assembly requested implementation of a number of measures to strengthen the investigation functions in the United Nations. The purpose of the present note is to inform the Assembly of the progress made to date.

2. In paragraph 12 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish an administrative mechanism for the mandatory reporting by programme managers of allegations of misconduct to the Office of Internal Oversight Services and to report on the establishment of such a mechanism to the Assembly at the resumed part of its sixtieth session.

3. Full implementation of the request requires a considerable change in existing procedures and the establishment of a supporting information tool. Shortly after the adoption of resolution 59/287, and in view of the special focus on sexual exploitation and abuse and other misconduct in field missions, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Human Resources Management addressed in the first place the need for procedures to ensure prompt reporting to the Office of Internal Oversight Services of cases arising in field missions. Interim procedures and protocols have been put into place and are currently being reviewed to address the issues that have arisen so far in their implementation. Once this is done, and learning from the experience already gained, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Department of Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will work, in consultation with other stakeholders, on a mechanism that would apply Secretariat-wide.

4. A database is being designed as an information tool to improve the reporting, monitoring and tracking of misconduct in peacekeeping field missions.

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5. In paragraph 15 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that an appropriate mechanism is in place to protect staff members who report misconduct within the Secretariat against retaliation. This was done by the issuance of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2005/21 on 19 December 2005, which put into place a comprehensive system of protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations.

6. In paragraph 17 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all staff of the Organization are informed of the most common examples of misconduct and/or criminal behaviour and their disciplinary consequences, including any legal action, with due regard to the protection of the privacy of the staff member(s) concerned. This was done by the issuance on 30 August 2005 of information circular ST/IC/2005/51 on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters.

7. A full report on the implementation of resolution 59/287 will be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.